HY 2550: Introduction to Southeast Asian History

Module: HY2550 (Summer 2008)
Module Title: Introduction to Southeast Asian History
Semester: Special Term, 23 June - 25 July 2008
Teaching Staff: Martin Platt, <platt@hum.ku.dk>

Schedule: 23 June - 25 July 2008

Aims and Objectives:
This course aims to investigate a variety of aspects of Southeast Asia’s history while at the same time encouraging students to engage with issues of what history is or can be, who writes it, and for what purposes. Rather than following a time line through an overall historical narrative, we will instead explore different approaches to learning about the past, including academic history, local history, oral history, autobiography, and film. The course will concentrate on the experience of history by individuals in the region at different places and times: contexts will include Burmese traditions, Vietnamese colonial life, independence-era Java, a Malay sultanate in Siam, prisoners in New Order Indonesia, Lao political re-education, and contemporary Thai nostalgia. Taking advantage of our location and the Southeast Asia in Context program, students will practice history themselves by carrying out a short oral history project of their own.

Teaching Modes: Lectures, in-class discussions, field trips, project and presentation

Readings: Required readings for each class are given below and marked with an asterisk (*). Supplementary readings are also listed for some meetings. A useful background text is D.J. Steinberg, ed. 1987. In Search of Southeast Asia. Revised Edition. Honolulu: U Hawaii Press. This text provides context for some of the topics and subject matter we will be covering in class.

Syllabus

Week 1

Monday June 23: Introduction: Global, Regional, Local, Marginal

Tuesday June 24: Pattani, Siam, Thailand I


**Wednesday June 25:** Pattani, Siam, Thailand II


**Thursday June 26:** Field Trip to Fort Canning, National Museum (led by John Miksic)

**Friday June 27:** Local History in Southern Thailand


**Week 2**

**Monday June 30:** Speaking for Oneself


Supplementary Reading:

Tuesday July 1:  Field trip to Malacca (led by John Miksic)

Wednesday July 2:  Telling One’s Own Story

Thursday July 3:  Imprisoned in the New Order

Friday July 4:  Interviewing: Issues and Techniques

Week 3

Monday July 7: No Class-- Conduct and Process Interviews
**Tuesday July 8:** Film: *Bang Rajan* (in Thai, with English subtitles)

**Wednesday July 9:** Film and History in Thailand


**Supplementary Reading:**


**Thursday July 10:** Present and Discuss Projects; Papers Due

**July 11 - 22: Trip to Thailand and Cambodia**

**Week 5**

**Wednesday July 23:** No Class (writing report and preparing for final exam)

**Thursday July 24:** 10:00 - 12:00 Wrap-up lectures

**Friday July 25:** Field trip reports due  
Final Examination  
6:00 pm Closing ceremony and dinner

**Assessment:**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance, Participation / Discussion</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Log (Thailand portion)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam (HY2550 portion)</td>
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Field Log: This is not an account of what you did, but a reflection on your observations on the trip and how you relate them to the formal study of Southeast Asia, including class readings, issues, and discussions.

Class Project: Students will form small groups (each with at least one Singapore student), and each group will design, carry out, and write up their own short oral history project. Choice of interview subject, topic, and approach will be related to materials and issues considered in class, but specifics (e.g., the person interviewed, the questions asked, and the final write-up) will be determined by each group in consultation with the instructor. Details to be provided in class.

Final Exam: This will be a sit-down exam covering the entire summer program.